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Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
Pemberville, Ohio

LOCAL HISTORY

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Pemberville, Ohio



1861 - 1961

100th Anniversary

Pemberville Public Library

375 E. Front St.

Pemberville, Ohio 43450

Bethlehem Lutheran Church

Pemberville, Ohio



100th Anniversary

1861 - 1961

Allen County Public Library
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1861



Events and Services

SUNDAY, October 1

7:45 A.M. }
10:45 A.M. } ANNIVERSARY COMMUNION SERVICES
7:00 P.M. }

*Preacher: The Rev. Paul Aufderstrasse
Immanuel Lutheran Church, New Orleans,
Louisiana*

SUNDAY, October 8

8:15 A.M. } FESTIVAL
10:45 A.M. } ANNIVERSARY WORSHIP SERVICE

*Preacher: The Reverend Norman A. Menter, D.D.
President, Michigan District, A.L.C.
Liturgist: The Reverend William Wiegman
Pastor Emeritus of St. James Lutheran
Church, Bradner, Ohio*

7:30 P.M. ANNIVERSARY SERVICE OF PRAISE—
Neighborhood Night

*Preacher: The Reverend Theodore Menter
St. Paul Ev. Lutheran Church,
Niagara Falls, New York
Liturgist: The Reverend Elmer Zimmerman
St. John's Lutheran Church, Fremont, Ohio*

MONDAY, October 9

6:30 P.M. ANNIVERSARY BANQUET AND PROGRAM
FOR THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

*Speaker: The Reverend Ernest Wintzrhoff
St. John Lutheran Church,
Rocky Ridge, Ohio*



TUESDAY, October 10

6:30 P.M. ANNIVERSARY BANQUET AND PROGRAM
FOR THE MEN OF THE CHURCH

Speaker: The Reverend Theodore G. Buntz

St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio

WEDNESDAY, October 11

6:30 P.M. ANNIVERSARY BANQUET AND PROGRAM
FOR THE YOUTH OF THE CHURCH

Speaker: The Reverend William G. Menter

*Christ Lutheran Church, Agincourt,
Ontario, Canada*

SUNDAY, October 15

8:15 A.M. {
10:45 A.M. { *CONFIRMATION REUNION SERVICE*

Speaker: The Reverend Norman Bosse

*Christ Lutheran Church (Dowling),
Bowling Green, Ohio*

12:30 P.M. BUFFET DINNER for out of town visitors

4:00 P.M. PICTORIAL REVIEW OF THE CHURCH'S
HISTORY - *Pemberville School*

SUNDAY, October 22

8:15 A.M. 100th ANNIVERSARY PROJECT SUNDAY

10:45 A.M. Commissioning of Visitors for Building Fund
Campaign

SUNDAY, October 29

8:15 A.M. {
10:45 A.M. { *LUTHERAN SUNDAY (Reformation)*

Preacher: The Reverend Norman Schellhase

*Bethlehem Lutheran Church,
Pemberville, Ohio*



A Message From The Pastor

*"Remember the days of old,
consider the years of many gen-
erations; ask your father, and he
will show you; your elders, and
they will tell you."—Deut.32:7*

These words from the Old Testament may well describe the reactions of the people of Bethlehem congregation as we celebrate our 100th anniversary.

WE REMEMBER with praise to God the days during which He called, gathered, and enlightened many of His children in this Christian congregation.

WE REMEMBER with repentant faith the day when the Lord Jesus "died for us, that we should live together with Him."

WE REMEMBER with respect the days when pastors and parish school teachers gave spiritual leadership and enlightenment to the children, youth, and adults of Bethlehem congregation.

WE REMEMBER with trust the days when faith in God and determination of purpose motivated the congregation to make great decisions, to render needful services, and to venture into challenging projects.

WE REMEMBER with joy the days of spiritual learning, devotional worship, grateful giving, and willing labors shared by the members of the congregation.

WE REMEMBER with devotion to duty the days of service given by the members of the church in teaching Sunday School, serving as church officers, providing the church music, leading the organizations, and planning the church's program and activity.

WE REMEMBER with vision this day when God challenges us to a bright and eventful future, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."

Sincerely in Christ,
NORMAN SCHELLHASE
Pastor.

The History Of Bethlehem Congregation



A heritage of God's abundant blessing, of dedicated pastors and teachers, and of devoted and hard working Christian people summarizes the history of Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Pemberville, Ohio. In this short summary we recall a few historical events and renew acquaintances with a few people of the past as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the organization of Bethlehem congregation.

CHAPTER 1. A NEW CHURCH IS BORN

In a little log school house at the edge of Pemberville in eastern Wood County, a new Lutheran congregation was born on December 20, 1861. Twenty-five families became the nucleus of this Christian family as they organized themselves as the German Evangelical Lutheran Bethlehem's Congregation of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in Freedom Township. The mother church was Salem Lutheran Congregation located on Bradner Road whose object was to provide for the people of Pemberville a place of worship and a school for the religious instruction of their children.

CHAPTER 2. THE CHURCH GROWS IN PEMBERVILLE

Within a few months the log cabin was inadequate to serve the needs of the new congregation. A new church was dedicated on October 31, 1862. A parsonage was purchased, and in 1865 a new school building was erected. The church was enlarged about 1880. In 1893 the present parsonage was erected. With many of the members contributing hours of hard work and many sacrificial gifts the present stone church building was built and equipped in 1909 at a

cost of about \$33 000. A new pipe organ was installed in 1925. Extensive repairs and remodelling made it a modern up-to-date building for the Sunday worship and education program by 1955.

From the original congregation of 25 families our congregation has grown to over 400 family units with 1200 baptized and 900 confirmed members.

CHAPTER 3. THE CHURCH IS EDUCATION MINDED

One of the main purposes of organizing Bethlehem congregation was the establishment of a Christian school for the children. In the earliest days a layman who taught at Salem's school also taught for several days of the week in Pemberville. When the Reverend Bauch became pastor in 1862 he also served as teacher in the school. "The old brick school building" served many years to provide a home for the educational training and long-remembered experiences of people who are still active today in our church and in churches of widely scattered areas. In 1872 J. J. Brater became the first full time teacher, teaching both English and German. Other teachers who guided the future destinies of the children of Pemberville were Christian Goering, C. J. Gruenewald, Mr. Harbeck, Mr. Hofman, A. Oberschulte, H. Zimmermann, Elvena Blasey, W. C. Egbert, and P. J. Springer. Mr. Springer is still with us and served as a member of our 100th Anniversary Committee. The parish school ceased its operation in 1938.

In the year of 1906 the Sunday School was organized with some difficulty. It supplemented the training received in the Christian Day School and provided religious education to those not attending the parish school. The first staff of teachers included Mrs. Bertha Winterhoff Wagner and Mrs. F. W. Zindler, who are still living at this time. The average attendance of 100 in 1909 has grown to an enrollment of about 550 at the time of our 100th anniversary. Hundreds of our members have served for long or short periods of time. Serving for approximately 30 years or over have been such teachers as Marie Bushman, Otto Bruning, Emma Kechele, Irvin Menter, Mrs. Fred Brolhost, and Mrs. Harley Menter.

To provide added spiritual and Biblical training for the children and youth of the church the congregation now provides a weekly four-year catechism course, a monthly Junior Lutheran program, and a two-week summer vacation church school.

In September of 1945, Miss Angeline Sandwisch was called as parish worker to assist the pastor and the congregation in supervising the office work and giving some leadership in the education, evangelism and youth programs of the congregation.

CHAPTER 4. LANGUAGE IS A PROBLEM

The congregation was organized as a German speaking congregation. The early training in the school was in the German language. In 1872 three days were given to teaching in German, two to English. In 1873 English was dropped temporarily but resumed again the following year. When the Reverend E. H. D. Winterhoff became pastor in 1899 it was decided to have English services on alternate Sunday evenings. In 1921 it was voted by the congregation to introduce the English language at alternate services, both morning and evening. Later, the decision was made to have both German and English services each Sunday morning. At the close of the ministry of the Reverend T. G. Buntz in 1954 it was voted to omit all German services. The hesitancy of providing English speaking services caused some families to organize a new congregation, known as Martin Luther Church. This congregation had a short life however.

CHAPTER 5. PASTORAL LEADERSHIP.

The first pastor called by the congregation to serve as both pastor and teacher was the Reverend Julius Bauch who served for four years. A spiritual guide in assisting the congregation in its early organization was the Reverend G. Cronenwett. For about two years the Reverend G. E. Bucholz assumed duties as pastor and teacher, followed by the Reverend E. Kornbaum who relinquished his teaching duties to the first fulltime teacher. He served for ten years, followed by a five-year service by the Reverend F. A. Wolf. The Reverend C. J. L. Benzin came to Pemberville in 1883 and served the congregation for 16 years. When the new church was built in 1909 the Reverend E. H. D. Winterhoff was engaged in his ministry of twenty years to Bethlehem congregation. For the nine-year period of 1919 to 1928, the Reverend J. W. Kuntz served the spiritual needs of the congregation. His successor was the Reverend E. G. Richter who served until 1939 when the Reverend T. G. Buntz assumed pastoral leadership. After he accepted the call to go to the Orphans' and Old Folks' Home at Toledo, the Reverend Norman C. Schellhase was installed as pastor in January of 1955, and serves as the pastor at the time of this 100th Anniversary Celebration.

CHAPTER 6. A BROADER VISION

The vision of Bethlehem congregation reaches beyond the town of Pemberville. The first pastor also served the congregations at Bradner and Stony Ridge. In 1881 several families withdrew to establish St. Paul's congregation at New Rochester. The Reverend W. C. Egbert who served as a parish school teacher in Pemberville, took further training for the ministry and later became one of the pastors of St. Paul's congregation.

The members of the congregation have for many years supported generously the program of the church at large in the work of missions, higher education and the charitable institutions of the Church. Beginning in 1946 the congregation adopted the Reverend John Kuder as a missionary serving in the church of New Guinea. The congregation has also given scholarship assistance to teachers and scholars in the schools of India and to the young people of the parish who prepared themselves for full-time ministry to the church. Some of the members and pastors of Bethlehem have served on various committees and boards of the district and the synod.

Since September of 1956, the morning worship services have been broadcast by radio over Stations WWBG, WTLG and WHRW. A large listening audience has been reached by the proclamation of the Gospel over the air.

When the church attendance began averaging over 600 each Sunday, the congregation approved having two worship services each Sunday, beginning in April of 1957.

CHAPTER 7.

SERVING GOD THROUGH THE ORGANIZATIONS

A Ladies Aid Society was organized in 1904, adopting the name of Ursula Cotta, to assist the church and the community in many avenues of service. These ladies became affiliated with the Women's Missionary Federation in 1922. In 1960 The Women of the Church program was adopted in which about 200 women have participated in a program of Bible Study and of service to the church and the community.

After a slow start in 1901, the Luther League has become a vital part of the spiritual and social lives of the young people of our church.

The men of the church organized a Brotherhood in 1920. Emphasizing devotion, education, service, and fellowship, these men have made contributions to the congregation, to the church at large and to the local institutions of mercy.

Choirs have served the church in its worship program during the past century. A mixed choir and a male choir sang for a number of years. The children of the Christian Day School did much singing at school, for funerals, and at church services. Today we have approximately one hundred people singing in the three church choirs.

Retaining their unity as a Luther League of about twenty-five years ago, the Friendship Circle has provided social and study opportunities for the young adults of the church.

CHAPTER 8.

"THY SONS AND DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY"

Appreciating the spiritual training and the worship leadership of a number of pastors and parish school teachers, Bethlehem Congregation has sent a number of its young people into full time church work. Many of them still serve the church today. Called into the ministry were: The Reverends William Wiegman, Norman A. Menter, Ernest Winterhoff, Elmer Zimmerman, Norman Bosse, Paul Aufderstrasse, Theodore Menter, and William Menter. William Kahlenberg is a second year student in the seminary. Dr. Norman A. Menter is the President of the Michigan District and the Vice President of The American Lutheran Church.

Serving as teachers in the Christian Day schools were John Bushman and Suzanne Menter. Serving on the staff of a church college are Richard Moenter and Daniel Springer. Marjorie Kaemming and Angeline Sandwisch have served the church as parish workers. Esther Deuble is a Deaconess in Milwaukee, and Marie Bushman has given many years of service to the Lutheran Welfare Service of Northwestern Ohio.

Upon reading the minutes of congregational actions of the past years, it becomes obvious that many of the members of the congregation have made personal sacrifices, initiated far-reaching decisions, and devoted hours of willing service to their Lord and their church.

CHAPTER 9. A LOOK INTO THE FUTURE.

Under God's providential hand we have experienced many blessings during the 100 years of our existence as a Christian congregation. As we look to the future we do so with faith, anticipation, and hope for a continuation of God's abiding presence and His loving care of our congregation.

To continue sending young people out into the world to face its problems, tensions, and possible persecutions will demand that we give them a good Christian training and example. To send our young people in the service of their church as ministers, teachers, choir members, Sunday School teachers, church officers, we must prepare them and challenge them with the thrill and reward of Christian service.

To facilitate our program of Christian training, the congregation has decided to enter into a program of erecting an educational building as a project of gratitude and challenge for our 100th Anniversary.

As we begin our Second Century, we begin in a new Church—The American Lutheran Church. We begin facing great international crises and potential atheistic influence upon our lives.

We must "WATCH AND PRAY."

We must "STAND FAST IN OUR FAITH."

We must dedicate ourselves to be "FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD."



1. Rev. P. J. Bauch, 1862-66 2. Rev. P. G. G. Buchholz, 1866-68
 3. Rev. G. Kornbaum, 1868-78 4. Rev. P. F. N. Wolf, 1878-83
 5. Rev. C. J. L. Benzin, 1883-98 6. Rev. E. H. D. Winterhoff, 1899-1919



Rev. J. W. Kuntz, 1919-28



Rev. E. G. Richter, 1928-39



Rev. T. G. Buntz, 1939-54

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Raymond Heckman	Wilson Witker	Richard Rahe
Jack Eisenhour	Christy Beeker	Norman Drewes
Robert Bruning	Victor Kohring	Lowell Hagereyer
Norman Asmus	Donald Kohring	Robert Shammo
Norman Rolf	Marion Bushman	Ronald Walters

COMMITTEE ON PARISH EDUCATION

Douglas Wegman	Mrs. Ronald Layman	Donnan Marten
Lowell Hamen	Mrs. Alfred Sander	Robert Kohring
Mrs. Robert Beeker	Mrs. Arthur Lohrbach	Melvin Karns

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Mrs. John Sander	Mrs. Kenneth Kirkbride	Louis Witker
Mrs. Lowell Hamen	Miss Irene Kahlenberg	Pastor N. Schellhase
Miss Marilyn Witker	Mrs. Norman Frederich	Mrs. Elmer Bushman
Mrs. Paul Henline	Miss Paulette Schuer-	Mrs. Harley Menter
Miss Rebecca Henline	man	Mrs. Ernest Kahlenberg
Mrs. Donald Rahe	Mrs. Edward Sander Sr.	Mrs. Norman Siek
Mrs. Robert Kohring	Mrs. Norman Taulker	Irvin Menter
Mrs. Norman Aufder-	Mrs. Fred Loomis	Howard Kroeger
strasse	Mrs. Theo. Sander	Lowell Hamen
Mrs. James Borcherd-	Mrs. Maynard Storms	Orland Otto
ing	Mrs. Earl Hoodlebrink	Franklin Titkemeier
Mrs. Franklin Schuer-	Mrs. Harold Rahe	Norman Drewes
man	Miss Joann Sander	Robert Panning
Mrs. Martin Wiegman	Miss Angeline Sand-	Douglas Wegman
Miss Marlene Wiegman	wisch	Mrs. Norman Schellhase
Mrs. Alvin Dusing	Mrs. Paul Smearsoll	Dale Bruning
Mrs. Arthur Hagemeyer	Mrs. Louis Witker	Paul Henline

LUTHER LEAGUE OFFICERS

David Schellhase	Molly Menter	June Heckman
Donald Smearsoll	Tresa Dusing	Beth Herman
Carol Stickle	Tommy Reitzel	

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

OFFICERS

Mrs. H. W. Dierksheide
 Mrs. Norman Rolf
 Mrs. Robert Sharp
 Miss Geraldine Ortman
 Mrs. Frederick Heck-
 man
 Mrs. Clarence Henschen

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Bruce Ehmke
 Fred Loomis
 Mrs. Bruce Ehmke
 Edward Sander Jr.

CIRCLE LEADERS

Mrs. Arthur Hage-
 meyer
 Mrs. Harley Menter
 Mrs. George Bitter
 Mrs. Paul Smearsoll

JUNIOR LUTHERANS

Gayle Lohrbach
 Dennis Layman
 Linda Dusing
 Joanne Abke

THE BROTHERHOOD

Wendell Hatas
 Harold Rahe
 Roland Kohring
 Fred Kuhlman

THE ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

William Campbell
 P. J. Springer
 Mrs. H. W. Dierksheide
 Mrs. Norman Sieving
 Irvin Menter

THE CHURCH STAFF

Pastor—Norman C. Schellhase
 Parish Worker—Miss Angeline Sandwisch
 Choir Director and Organist—James Musolf
 Custodian—Edwin Sieving

